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PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 24, 1980 - HOLD FOR WEDNESDAY MORNING
 For further information, contact Michael J. O'Neil, 225-4121

Congressman Edward P. Boland (D-Mass), chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, responded on Monday, March 24, to the explanation contained in a classified letter from Admiral Stansfield Turner, Director of Central Intelligence, of the use which the CIA has made of journalists for intelligence purposes. Boland commended Turner for his "judicious use" of the discretionary waiver authority the CIA Director had reserved to himself in promulgating a 1977 regulation restricting the use to which the CIA could put American journalists and media. Boland stated that this restraint had the effect of creating "a stronger press and a healthy, efficient CIA."

Boland also noted that the issue of whether, and to what extent, media, religious or academic cover should be used by U.S. intelligence agencies was a topic of great concern to many groups - particularly missionaries - who had contacted the intelligence committee. He asked Turner to work with the Committee in developing "an appropriate legislative approach to the use of cover that will allay the fears of those Americans whose professions take them abroad and who will not have the advantage - as have I - of examining the actual use to which cover is put by the intelligence community."

Cover issues will be more fully discussed when the intelligence committee continues its hearings on H.R. 6588, the National Intelligence Act of 1980, on Thursday, March 27 (9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.). H.R. 6588, the omnibus intelligence charter bill, contains a provision which prohibits entities of the intelligence community from using media, religious or academic cover, but it does not prohibit voluntary contacts between members of these professions and the intelligence community.